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Category: Stranger Things, 2016

Genre: Romance

Language: English

Characters: Eleven/Jane H., Mike W.

Status: Completed

Published: 2017-12-18 10:04:21

Updated: 2017-12-18 10:04:21

Packaged: 2019-12-17 03:10:34

Rating: K+

Chapters: 1

Words: 2,064

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: She had been watching him. Had he not bought his flashlight outside with him he never would have seen her. To think that he could have missed her so simply made his heart ache. How long had she been watching him for? Weeks? Months? Mileven oneshot

Chase

Wow my first fic that isn't Harry Potter related! I love Stranger Things and these beans so much so enjoy this little bit of Mileven!

"See you tomorrow, Mike!"

"Yeah, see ya."

Mike stood outside of the door that went from the basement to the driveway, watching his friends hop on their bikes and ride away. Ever since Will disappeared, on a night almost identical to every other one, Mike was hesitant to watch them go home on their own. As their bikes started to get smaller and smaller a familiar feeling of anxiety settled in his stomach. 'They'll be fine' he told himself. After everything that happened each of them had made a point to be more aware of their surroundings. They'd considered taking self defense classes, but never actually followed through with the idea.

He walked to the end of the driveway, clicking his flashlight on and aiming it in the direction that they'd gone. Every night after the boys got home they let each other know that they had made it back safely. He pushed his hair away from his face, not used to it being so long. Mike panned the flashlight across the street, not expecting to see anything. Just for good measure. He'd learned to be cautious and take in his surroundings as often as possible.

In the small patch of wooded area down the street from his house he caught the smallest bit of movement. Just a glimpse of someone standing not quite out of sight, their body aimed in his direction. He was being watched. Mike glanced at his house, then back at the woods. Before he could properly consider the danger of wandering off so late at night he turned off his flashlight and started towards the woods.

As he crossed the street, walking quietly in hopes of catching whoever was watching him off guard, he wondered who it could be that was watching him. The only two choices that made any sort of sense was a school bully, or someone from the lab. Mike was

prepared to face a school bully, having gone through a growth spurt and developing more of a backbone. He hoped it wasn't someone from the lab, but he didn't dismiss the possibility. It wasn't uncommon for him to be out in public and catch an adult staring at him, often men dressed fairly well. They never looked away when Mike caught them staring. They just wanted to scare him, and he swore he wouldn't give them the satisfaction of showing just how much they intimidated him.

Mike was just starting to get close to the spot where he'd seen someone standing when he heard them take off. Their hurried footsteps crushed the leaves and twigs, easily giving their escape away. Mike took off after them, darting between the trees and hoping he'd catch up. He turned on the flashlight, but only ever caught a few glimpses that didn't last long enough for him to see who he was chasing.

Just as he was starting to catch up he tripped over a branch and crashed to the ground. He cursed as his forearm connected with a rock, numbing his arm with instant pain. Mike rolled onto his side, his unhurt arm wrapping around his injured one. If he was in fact chasing someone from the lab he had just made himself the perfect target. But his rolled ankle and injured arm made the idea of trying to get away laughable. He rolled onto his back again, resting his head against the ground, still wincing in pain as he stared up at the trees.

Mike lay on the ground, waiting to be ambushed by men in suits and taken to the lab hidden somewhere in the trees. The feeling of helplessness that used to greet him daily after the events from the year before started to overcome him once more. He stared up at the sky, cradling his arm as he took sharp breaths through his open mouth. The air was cold in his lungs, but it somehow made him feel better. Nearby he could hear footsteps, and he braced himself for the worst. Though what exactly the worst was was a mystery.

Seconds passed until they turned into a minute, and still nothing had happened. Mike's expression changed into one of confusion, and he forced himself upright. His eyes searched the dark forrest for the figure he'd been chasing only moments ago. Had the footsteps belonged to an animal? Or had he just imagined them all together? With some difficulty he got to his feet, picking his flashlight back up.

He considered turning back and going home, making up an excuse for his injuries on the way back, when he met a pair of brown eyes.

She was gone before he could get a good look at her, but there was no doubt in his mind it was her. Mike took off running faster than his legs had ever carried him before. He could never forgive himself if he let her get away a second time. The cold air turned harsh in his throat as he ran, but he didn't care. With each glimpse he caught of her during the chase, the faster he ran.

But she was the slightest bit faster than him, always just out of reach. Every time he started to gain on her she would shoot forward. Panic started to bubble up in his chest. What if he couldn't catch her? What if she got away again? No, he couldn't even think of it as a possibility. Loosing her the first time had completely shattered him. Loosing her again was not an option.

"Eleven, stop!" He yelled as he chased after her, his voice traveling miles in the dead of night. The deeper into the woods they got the more she started to stumble. The adrenaline pumping through his veins wasn't likely to die down any time soon, leaving him feeling as if he could run forever.

Then a miracle happened. A branch, hanging low enough to reach her shoulder got stuck on her shirt and she had to stop to pull herself free. Only he was right behind her, and his hand secured around her wrist while the branch was still attached to her. His fingers wrapped tightly around her arm to keep her in place, he stepped into her line of sight. All words seemed to have escaped into the night air, leaving him speechless.

While it had been about a year he was still shocked at how different she looked. She was older, and her hair was longer. He'd always imagined the synthetic blonde locks whenever he wondered what she would look like without a shaved head. Curls had never come to mind before. His eyes found hers and he was still at a loss for words. The only sound was their heavy panting from the chase. How long had he ran after her for? It felt like seconds, but at the same time like hours.

Mike stared at her face, her expression impossible to read. For the

better half of a year he had done his best to convince himself that she was alive. That she was out there somewhere. But without any sort of proof he had started to lose hope. He called her every night on his walkie talkie, on the off chance that she might actually answer. But she never did. The more time passed the less easy it was to hold onto the hope that she was out there somewhere.

Yet there she was, right in front of him. If he wasn't holding onto her arm he would have wondered if she was just a hopeful figment of his imagination. He saw her in his dreams often, and sometimes flashes of her when he was awake. But he knew this was real.

She had been watching him. Had he not bought his flashlight outside with him he never would have seen her. To think that he could have missed her so simply made his heart ache. How long had she been watching him for? Weeks? Months?

Once her shirt was free of the branch she started to squirm and he began to panic, his grip on her wrist tightening. He wasn't going to let her get away again. Mike put his hand on her cheek, forcing her to look at him once more. "Eleven stop." He pleaded, "Please look at me."

With a sinking feeling he realized why she had run, why she was struggling to look at him. She didn't want to see him. She was avoiding him. He could feel his heart shattering into pieces and his knees going weak. Why didn't she want to see him? And if she didn't want to see him why watch him at all in the first place? His head was spinning and not just from adrenaline. Still he held onto her. Even if she didn't want to see him he wasn't going to let her go so easily.

"El, it's me." He said. Her attempts to escape his hold on her were futile, yet she still leaned away as if she was afraid of him. Her eyes were wide, still struggling to look at him directly. Though with his hand on her face she couldn't turn away.

A few moments passed and her eyes finally met his, her eyebrows pulled together on her forehead. "You weren't supposed to see me." She said, her voice shaky and quiet. Still the sound was music to his ears. Just another confirmation that she was really there, standing right in front of him. "It's not safe."

Though she was no longer trying to get away he still held onto her arm. He was afraid if he dared to let go she would disappear again, and he knew he couldn't survive losing her a second time. He'd hardly gotten through the past year without her, wondering where she was and if she was okay. If she was even alive. Doing it again was not an option. "You didn't want to see me?"

Eleven shook her head, her curly hair bouncing round her face. He had to hold himself back from reaching out and touching a curl. "I want you to be safe." She told him, her voice even more shaky than before as if she might cry any second. "You're not safe with me."

He knew exactly what she was referring to. The only clue he'd had about if she was alive or not was when he spotted her outside his window while the Hawkins lab interrogated him, telling her how dangerous she was. Though whether she viewed herself or the people at the lab he wasn't sure. "I don't care." He said, inching towards her. Her eyes grew wider as he got closer but she didn't try to pull away. "I missed you so much, El. And I can't lose you a second time." She stared up at him, silent. "... Did you miss me?" Though he was afraid of hearing the answer he still asked. He needed to know if she still cared about him at all.

She hesitated, her eyes frozen on his. With each moment that passed a knot developed in his stomach and got tighter and tighter. Finally she nodded her head. "Yes."

Mike breathed an audible sigh of relief at her answer. He couldn't hold himself back any longer, wrapping his arms around her and pulling her into a tight hug. Every night for almost a year he had hoped and dreamed of seeing her again. Now that it was actually happening he felt as if he should pinch himself. It seemed too good to be true that she was there in front of him. Not only that but she missed him too. He felt her arms wrap around his neck, followed by the sound of a small snuffle. "Please don't leave me again." He said, his voice muffled slightly by her shirt.

"I promise, Mike." She said, her arms tightening around him and pulling him closer to her.